

Richard Carlyle

Selected Poems



Richard Carlyle

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Carlyle was born in Arkansas and attended Westminster College in Fulton, Montana. He moved to Los Angeles in the late 1920's where he married Elizabeth Ann Reverman. The couple travelled extensively throughout the world. Following his visit to India, Carlyle was the first to translate *The Psalms of Krishna* (1933) into English. Two mythopoeitic texts, *The Oracles* and *Demon Greed* followed in 1933 and 1934 respectively. During World War II, Carlyle headed the Los Angeles division of the U.S. Treasury Department's War Bond selling campaign. In 1937, he represented the United States as delegate to the International Congress of Philosophy before returning to Los Angeles to establish a business of appraising antiques and works of art. A political tract, *The Earth Belongs to the Living*, appeared in 1936.

The Oracles. Los Angeles: Phoenix Press, 1933.

Psalms of Krishna. Los Angeles: Phoenix Press, 1934.

Demon Greed. Los Angeles: Phoenix Press, 1934.

from The Oracles

MIND—INTELLIGIBLES—INTELLECTUALS

From One to Three and Three plus Two
Plus Two—which turns to Four and Three
And into One Again. Thus few
Are countless—springing from the Tree
Of sensed Creator in the Mind,
Aspected from the unsensed dark
Of blinding Light. The higher kind,
Conditioned Four, contains the spark
Of Principles which grow to Gods.
The lower Three breathe out the pair
Called wretched or the happy pods
Which mortals grow in moments rare
And call them Fate. Some say the All
Most inert was—a mass of crude
And dormant stuff, which formed the ball
Of earth and other spheres. So brewed
The nebulae and planes, 'tis said
By those who think the outer man
The inner man of Man. And led
By dwarfed messiahs, boldly scan
The outer, not the Inner Throne
Of Inner-God. And liquid seas
From liquid acids came, 'tis known
By wiser heads. And hills and trees
In solid acid form were made
From jelly specks of Perfect Thought.
Eternal, unconditioned; braid
Of collectivity and wrought
From Him who never could exist
Without the Three, which, understood,
Do always understand. The mist
Of ignorance is but a wood
Made dense by seeing not beyond
The Mind and of the Mind. To know

The Force which moves Empyrean wand
And Itself moves Itself. To go
Above the Framers of the world
Into the Mind of Mind where spins
The Cosmic Weaver, and the whirled
And whirless Life—the “outs” and “ins.”
Who knows the super-mundane deep,
Paternal depth, knows certainly
The group which dominates the heap
Of dominating Ones. And see
With all the flowers of the Eye,
Made Third, the things which must be known;
For if the orb of Mind will try
Some parts of All will thus be shown—
Not wholly, All, for 'tis a power
Of circumlucid strength and rays
Of Intellect. And guard that hour
Most carefully; it often pays
A glimpse of vehemence of Mind;
Then Thought is lost. The ample flame
E'er needs the ample glowing kind
Of measurements. Although the name
Is known and measured thus, the One
Back of the name is not revealed.
But mortal thought, when it has done
Unfixedly its task, the yield
Is unfixed, strong solidity.
The pure and lucid eye must e'er
Revolve within the Soul, and see
That empty minds transfix their stare
Towards the One of Three; for It
Is understood by all who pass
The tests. Each spark, each informed bit,
Each Monad of the Whirling Mass
Yields to the Mind and serves the Will
Of Noumenon, the pilot who
Conducts the whirl and wheel and still
Re-actionary founts. All through

The boundless Space, Entelechies,
Those morning stars, whirl on and on.
No rest, no sleep, no time for these
To foster selfish plans. They spawn
And breed subservience, and work
By reason of the Menace Whole.
And in the Ideated Murk,
The Two containing Life and Soul,
And Him, self-operating, framed
That which is framed. And Who first sprung
The hidden door of Self and named
His works the All. No old or young,
No death, no great or small, just Life
Eternal, everchanging. Yet, the true
And ever-same; for peace or strife
Doth change It not. Forever new
To man, these basic things of whirl
And spin, but never clothed with ought
But what IT IS to Him. Man's pearl
Of price, through impulse, may be bought,
And by a change of mind, decide
On other gems. But He can ne'er
Make change or trade, e'en though He tried
For He is All. And air is air
And sea is sea and earth is earth,
Though scattered much, there is a plan:
All Force to Them—MIND, She gives birth.
To be thus predicates the Man.

from Demon Greed

The schools take mediocre wood and try
To make a sturdy beam superior;
And on each campus, in the classrooms lie,
The lolling snobs who are inferior,
As founts of knowledge, but who would have made
The much-tabooed, the thing so seldom known,
A humble gentleman—had they but stayed
At home and thought and worked. That would have sown
A worthwhile seed. And struggle would have brought
A larger share of life, and that degree
Of understanding which cannot be bought
Or found upon a sheep-skin vanity.
Success is all that matters—not what use
To all humanity are we. No one
Will care how got—none will demand excuse
For means—if we have in the race outrun
The common herd and placed our names among
The idolized and sacred rich. Success!
What more can mortal mind conceive? What rung
Beyond this dream to climb? What more can bless
Mankind? Mass education does not ask
A thing but the enrollment fee per year;
It does not question what the student's task
In life, or the one reason why he's here.
Success is pounded into shallow minds
So much that few are armed to meet the fate
Of work; and when he leaves, the student finds
A pewter world and not the silver plate
Which education prophesied would be
Filled high with spicy, easy food. Ah, no,
The college or the university
Cannot give birth to mind; it can bestow
But little more than we brought in its door.
“Unfair!” the mass will cry. “Give us a chance.”
The masses do not seem to know that more
Than school is asked to better circumstance.

“Refuse to keep the noble things,” cried Greed.
“Nor aid the honest or the things of God.
Push them aside as beggar tribe who bleed
You of your ruthless sentiment. Nor nod
In friendliness at anything of worth.
Print every lie—grudge every truth—and let
Your trumpet-note be that of jeering mirth;
And lead the minds in devilry. Forget
Belief in God. Make Atheism king.
Turn churches into stables. Use the cross
For milepost, marking evil path; and sing
The hymns to God in parody. And toss
“The Ten Commandments in the fire;
For if the people practice them, the rule
Of wickedness would instantly expire;
For Greed can’t live where Man is not a fool.
Inflame competitors—set trade ’gainst trade.
Turn nations into seething wars. Intrigue
The vanity of men. Let them parade
Like hoodlums in their parliaments.” The League
Of Peace designed through fear cannot withstand
The high conceit of him who grabs the reins
And drives the chariot. The iron-clad hand
Of power-maniac though short in brains
Makes up for this with soldiery, and drives
The helpless thoughtless Man before the spear
Of deep insanity, and turns the lives
Of innocents into nightmares. It’s fear
That makes men fiends like this, fear born in weak
Mentalities. Afraid that history
Will pass them by, they climb the public peak
To fall and plunge into obscurity.
Man cannot fight for peace and make it last,
For war decides all issues but the one
Which needed settlement. When men are past
The age of uniform and toy gun—
When peace means everything, and not a word
To shout when war has spent their last resource—

When ethics is the blood of human herd
And not a treaty debt which victor pours
Upon a vanquished back to make it pay
Indemnities—perhaps mankind will see
The folly of their means; the stupid way
They go about to find security.
Sometime they'll come to know, when they grow up,
That peace and strength and love are states of mind,
And that security flows from the cup
Of friendship sweet, not from another kind.
And man plods on tired out with care and woe.
His back weighed down with doubt and bulky fear.
And lack of faith makes stumbling feet and slow
Recovery. He thinks the coming year
A useless fight—the present, even more
Than that. Afraid to stand erect and face
The simple foes which he has whipped before,
He listens to complexities, and grace
Is thus refused. Afraid of men and things—
Yet even more afraid of self—that lack
Of necessary confidence e'er brings
Him to his knees, weighed down. He tries to stack
The cards in Life's high game, but soon finds out
That dealing aces to himself is still
Another thing. And nervous hands in doubt
Throw all the winning cards to foe—until
Left with a measly pair, he tries to bluff
The knowing sharks, who call his hasty bet.
Then, short of chips and cards, and not enough
Reserve to play another hand, Regret
Slips in and bends him lower still. To lose
When we play fair is never quite so bad;
And if we know the game, we either choose
To play or not to play. The very sad
And tragic part is that some men work hard
Most all their lives at some small trade, and through
Economy and thrift they find reward
In healthy bank account; then, many do

The foolish thing by staking all their sweat
On stocks or shares in distant gamblers' pool.
Of course, they lose, as all men know. As yet
The games of chance are made to trim the fool
Who blindly bets. No home was ever blessed
By getting rich too fast. Nor is man's name
Raised to an honored height if he should wrest
An easy fortune in the gambling game.
No matter what the game might be; so long
As it's a game, it can't mean honest work.
So pass it by, Mankind, and let your song
Of freedom ride the season's breeze. And shirk
The gaming board, the dice, the cards; your wealth
Is in your family and home. Shun chance
And easy fortune as a plague. Your health
And peace of mind, your solid circumstance,
Is something that no gold could ever buy.
Be honest with yourself, and keep your mind
Content with slow progressiveness; and die
A painless, peaceful death. Nor leave behind
A pile of debts for progeny to pay.
For man's stupidity already claims
Their life from birth. The debts of yesterday
Must be cleared up by them. The list of names
To whom they owe their all shall ever be
A blot upon the heart of man. The list
Of wars in countless millions easily
Demands the greater sums. The strange, strange twist
Of alphabet which spells the useless name
Of charity comes next. No man can know
How much is doled out to that hungry flame—
A needed flame today; but even so,
'Tis but a wide deep mark against mankind
And his intelligence. Remove the cause
For charity. Let wheels of commerce grind
For common good. Observe the basic laws
Of life—for but a day at least—and see
How soon this debt is wiped away. Apply

A little common sense to life; and we
Can't suffer very much. To make a try
And fail in part is honorable. To live—
To be of use to man is fame enough.
To know that we can't get unless we give
Takes man beyond mortality. The stuff
Of which the truly great are made is but
The will to do the needed thing for man.
Such men can make a castle of a hut;
Such men will do the thing they know they can.

PART V

Strange though it is, mankind would rather be
A fat and bloated slave to some false god
Than be the king of Self. That deity
To whom he bows, with ceaseless push and prod,
Engulfs him deeper in the mire and muck
Of bondage—self imposed. Mankind has made
So many foolish gods; too much to luck
His mind has bent. Too much the old parade
Where spangles, tinsel, plume, and cape “fall down”
In hiding weak interiors. Too dear
The voice of bally-hoo, that fickle clown
Who squawks his praise into the public's ear
Today, and by tomorrow glides away
To sing a different song. Too frail the thread
Which holds the crowd's esteem. None wants to pay
The fiddler's fee, but all desire to tread
And dance the steps of life. How bold the smile,
How brave the tongue, when everything is free;
But let the fiddler pass his hat the while
They prance and strut and glow with gaiety;
And like a dog, they droop their ears and tails
And slink away. Oh yes—free lunch, free wine
Finds all the shallow people on the rails
Of hosts who are not big enough to dine
Alone, but need the yowling mob to keep
Their ghosts away. And social climbers flit

From house to house with all their crafts and cheap
Pretensions. There they stand and there they sit—
Drab monuments on boredom's barren grave.
The climbers with their silly compliment
React like drugs upon the hosts who crave
The sound of praise, no matter how 'tis sent.
The earth has given countless stores for man
To use, and he has taken them and willed
Them into dust and smoke. The garbage can
In the majority of homes is filled
With food enough to feed a continent;
And yet the hunger cry continues loud
O'er all the earth. Mankind is not content
Unless he wastes; and some are really proud
To tell how they dump out enough to feed
A nation's mouths. It's hard to realize
In this presumed enlightened day the need
Which lives beneath the walls of much. It tries
The very soul to see the useless waste
Which day by day goes on with ceaseless stride,
To see the carts of spoiled food; the haste
In which man speeds to give his all to pride.
It pains the heart to see "success" destroy
The fine and noble nature of someone
For whom all men have worked, that he enjoy
The bounties of the earth. No man has done
The thing alone; nor can he ever say
'Tis so. Without the help of fellowman
No one may rise to any peak. In play
Or work co-operation is the plan
By which success is built. Let none assume
He got there by himself, for if Mankind
Did not permit the rise, the frosty gloom
Of failure would seek out and find
Ambitious man and keep him in the throng.
The human tolerance is very great;
But let the few beware of too much wrong,
For tolerance can easily be hate.

We've made a thousand gods, 'tis very true;
And some were fools and some were ruthless, cold.
We've idolized and worshipped some—a few
We've looked upon with fear and awe, and sold
Our rights as men to purchase grace. We've bowed
To them as founts of wisdom pure, and cheered
Them 'long the way. And we've been truly proud
Of them as fearless ones who hewed and cleared
And turned a forest dark into a great
Productive land. We've lent our blood and sweat
Without a word or frown; and any fate,
However harsh, was good, if we could get
Our gods to drop a shining coin or crumb
Into our calloused hands. We built around
Their sacred lives protecting walls; and come
What would, we never let them touch the ground
But kept them on their pedestals. No more
This foolish waste of energy, this loss
Of independent dream; for at the door
Stands Chaos for these useless gods of dross.
Adversity unmask the mighty giants
And shows a dwarfed and sickly, twisted frame.
It shows what men will do in sheer defiance
Of basic laws, just so they garner fame.
It shows how dull and stupid mortals are,
When they allow these rapists to pursue
Unhindered every common need and mar
And slash the face of Common Sense, and strew
The land with want and famine and disease
Of mind. It shows how chisel-ized has been
The human race—how quick it was to squeeze
The wealth of earth, and lose the name of Men.
A man can make a prize of anything
By placing it in some steel vault; and so
We did. The bubble broke, and showed the string
Of pearls to be crude counterfeit. The show
Was ended. Dazed, bewildered men sobbed loud,
And wrung their hands in frenzied cries to see

Their paper wealth consumed. The clammy shroud
Of slump hung o'er the earth. Humanity,
En masse, which always pays, and on whose back
The burden rests, plods feebly on its way
Toward a place bereft of gods, whose black
Deceit brought on the weight of want which they
Must carry for a generation's age.
For thieves have always thought their vices were
But virtues in disguise; and if the page
Of destiny is not cleaned of the blur
Of these "successful" men, and if the heart
And soul and mind are not considered by
The leaders of reform, destruction's cart
Will haul away the race of man to die.
And piles of bleaching bones and skeleton
Will tell to endless time how chisel-ized
And heardless man, through ruthless methods, won
Naught but a suicide's reward, despised.
The breed who take the mellow dung; and through
The alchemy of high conceit, would turn
Out perfect gems, must pass away. The "New
Deal" has no place for them. "New Deal" must burn
With flames of honesty and truth, nor halt
Until the march of purpose ends with these.
"New Deal" must clear the nation of its fault
Of fake success and build true deities.
"Come," cried the Demon incarnate. "Throw off
Your robes of Right and Truth—up and away
To yonder realms of sharp, eternal scoff
And ribald mockery—where devils play
With mortal souls and vanquish them to dust.
The great bright Star of Heaven tumbles down
Into the pit, deep, bottomless; and Lust
Pervades the earth with deathly stench. The crown
Of Life has turned to brass. The gate of Hell
Stands wide. The pit is open. Up! Speed on
With Me! Let swords of fear and trouble spell
The end for Man. Take all the human spawn

“And mangle them between the stones of Greed.
Lay waste their efforts with philosophy
That might is right. Tell them their God decreed
That to acquire must always mean 'to be.' ”
Like lightning now the Demon tore through Space.
His flaring crown of fire flashed forked flame.
The roar of monstrous wings seemed to erase
All sanity. From the inferno came
Loud cries and shrieks most horrible. From peak
To peak of toppling clouds that towered high
Above, the Demon leaped. And on his bleak
And heartless face that cruel smile, so sly
And crafty, played. And presently it seemed
As if a thin, pale line of purple fire
In far-off distance glimmered bright. It gleamed
In brilliant hue; a huge, gigantic spire
Of dense, black ridge was seen and jutting over
A vast, unestimated depth of cold
And clutching horror. The Demon's roar
Grew louder. On, He rushed—On—On, with bold
And reckless speed. He of the sable cape
And flaming crown urged on the Shedd with wild,
Nerve-breaking shouts. “On with the fiendish rape
Of Life!” He cried. “No halt 'till souls are piled
In shameful heaps, and men snarl like a pack
Of rabid dogs. Blast all their love and make
Their lives a living Hell! Pour on their back
Woe after woe; and parch their hearts, nor slake
The stinging thirst with drops of faith. Crowd out
The last invigorating spark of hope,
And chain their limbs and blind their eyes with doubt.
Keep clean their guns of hate and death. The rope
“Of homicide must bind their hearts and souls.
Nor let them rest 'till they have cut and maimed
All beauty, drowned all peace. Wrap in the folds
Of hate that absurd thing which God has named
Immortal Life. Make haste to kill the world!”
Cried Greed. “Make all the world go mad with change.

Up in the air, down on the earth, the whirled
And flying, tossing molecules of strange
And insane storm. Behold the end of All!
Be patient now, for ye shall never stray
Again. Be silent now, the beastly brawl
Is done. No more in holiness to pray.
The cursing, laughter, tears are of the past.
Let hoarded gold drop from your fingers numb;
It cannot purchase aught. Now stand aghast,
And see your handiwork, ye mortals dumb.
“See every shred of culture torn to rags;
See graves and ruins; see your world decay;
See death and tragedy; see all your bags
Of robbers’ wealth melt into Cosmic Spray;
And curse your fate.” Was it worthwhile, think you,
This rush headlong, this useless grind, this thirst
For wealth at any cost? This search for new
And insane thrills, sensations at their worst?
Oh! Did it pay, this road to silence cold?
Was it worthwhile, this trade of light for dark?
This change from beauty to decay—this bold
And useless rupture of the arts? The stark
And mangled body of the Nation’s dream
Lies rotting in the path of human strife.
The freedom which now hangs from selfish beam
Gives mute and lucid evidence of life
Gone mad with Greed. Sweet sounds of tenderness
And love for this still glow of hungry flame
Eternal which is never quenched. The dress
Of dull hypocrisy, the cloak of shame
Keeps not the cold from deadening our pride.
This gnawing of the ever-eager worm
Whose appetite is never satisfied.
This discontent which breeds the ghoulish germ
Of fire, starvation, famine, death, and woe.
The foolish way mankind puts all his trust
In “monied gods,” and letting values go
Along with cash. Into the sterile dust

Of stocks and bonds, he plants the hard-won seed
Of life and waits for it to bloom into
A sturdy tree; oblivious of Greed
Among his gods, he hastens on with new-
Found strength to plant another crop, which will
Be harvested by his false gods. Mankind
Must realize that values do not fill
His money box. He must decide in mind
And heart all by himself just what life is
And what the values are. The thing man thinks
He wants and that which really counts is his
Great problem now. What merits work, what links
His life together, firm and strong; what gives
Him peace, what makes his heart sing, glad and free?
All this mankind must know if mankind lives
To make and write another history.
For he has burnt a wondrous world to light
Hell with its flame, and he has stumbled in
The yawning graves which he has dug to spite
Or wreck another man. He hoped to win
Security the margin way, and now
He finds himself to be the thief who stole.
But man's colossal ego won't allow
Himself to face himself. He thinks the goal
Can still be won if only he can catch
The other fellow off his guard. As long
As men with crafty methods try to match
The Law of Compensation, the sad song
Of loss and failure will ring out in harsh
And stinging reprimand. Again the world
Shall blossom like a flower from the marsh;
And ye whose soulless lives have been unfurled
From every mast of life, and which have cursed
And been an outrage on its sacred face;
And ye who squandered life and dumbly burst
The honest globes of light and truth shall pace
The pleasant paths of life no more. For ye
Are done. There is no place for fiends like you

Who disregard the soul's nobility,
And slash and cut all decency, and hew
The basic values down. Rejoice, O earth!
Rejoice, O sea!—to be thus freed of weight
And burden of Mankind. No more the girth
Of thorns, no more the pain of lust and hate—
Rejoice, O birds!—the spoiler's hand shall slay
Nor wound again. Rejoice, O trees!—the blade
Of the destroyer shall no more lay
Ye down to rot. Ye creatures of the glade
And glen, rejoice!—that treachery must die,
To never stalk the world in man's disguise.
Take back thy planet, O Great God on High,
Cleansed of a pigmy race of greed and lies.
Create a new humanity, for this is past;
Create a heart that beats with kindly throb;
Create a mind that thinks in terms to last—
The better terms, not bigger ones which rob
Men of their right to live. Create a man
Who sees his duty through the jibes and sneers,
The curses, jeers of man; and one who can
Do right regardless, and who has no fears
What neighbor's tongue will blab. Create a race
Who say what purpose is by living
it, Who need no light but that which crowns the face
Of honesty. Create no thrones, but sit
Mankind in humbleness. Let riches be
Computed only in the sterling deed
Which each does unto each, without a fee
Except deep gratitude. Create the need
Of human helpfulness. Nor give to none
More wealth than he can use. Make strong the will.
Save mankind from himself, and give each one
A measure which his entire life must fill.
On—On—along the ridge, the Demon sped,
With tongues of fire and roar of batlike wings.
The crown of flame played 'round His death-like head,
And from the Monster came the thunderings

Of hate. And then as if for one brief spell
Of Time's split second, paused the swirling Shedd;
And like a shadow vast 'tween Space and Hell
He stood; with gloating eyes surveyed the red
And smoking embers of a world laid waste.
Around about Him soared the countless forms.
Terrific phantoms milled in eager haste
To win the favor of their god; and swarms
Of other things were seen: some like torn flags,
Some like wrecked ships, and some like sceptered kings
And warriors bold, and misers with their bags
Of gold, and women veiled in tears. The wings
Of Demon Greed stretched out to north and south.
Beneath them shone a pale and helpless mass
Of faces white, upturned wild eyes and mouth
Agape with terror. Like a sea of glass
The world was still. All crushed together in
A mass of agony. No sound at all
Came from the earth—no sound except the din
And bedlam of the Demon Greed whose fall
Into the unknown pit shook starry Space.
On—On—and down; down in the fathomless
And mystic gulf he plunged. And lightnings race;
The thunders crash; a million echoes dress
The universe with shatterings. One cry—
One frightful human sob rose slowly on
The worried air. And then all motions die;
And silence—silence o'er a world that's gone.
Now gently, faintly, by degrees, a pale
Gold glimmer parts the heavy dark, and dawn
With waving arms of light discards the veil
Of black. A cool wind sprays the air, and on
Its breath a fragrance sweet. And in the face
Of awful hush a scarlet sun unfurled,
And wrote upon the flaming, endless Space
The wordless epitaph of a closed world.

